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Exploring Evolutionary Medicine through 19th Century Medical Collections: Applications in Archival Studies

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Exploring Evolutionary Medicine through 19th Century Medical Collections: Applications in Archival Studies

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Abstract

The results of this study showed that natural sources that appeared frequently as ingredients for recipes also showed a strong tendency to provide molecular pathways involved throughout the entire body. Less common ingredients had a narrow scope of actions via molecular pathway.

Molecular pathways such as astringent (A), nerve (N), and expectorant (E) showed the highest frequency given the amount of ingredients used to make remedies. These pathways deal with the body as a whole rather than focusing on a particular body organ. Ingredients such as bloodroot, peppermint, spearmint, and wormwood all show properties of these molecular pathways. These ingredients were also the most commonly found in recipes.

A common misconception with homeopathic remedies is the cure of the disease. These remedies intend to care for the whole body rather than just the infected area by stimulating the body's natural ability to heal by diluting potency for maximum benefits.

Purpose

Evolution, public health, and its mechanisms for medicine will be proved through the exploration and analysis of a 19th century medicine archive collection. This primary source authenticates information and relationships between molecular pathways and ingredients of the recipes. It provides a way of connecting evolutionary medicine and historical medical formulations.

Theory

The use of archival research as a primary source ensures absolute truth. This method allows for researchers to use its information as supporting details to its purpose. This type of research is more complex and time consuming than the traditional Internet search. Archival sources are held in a Special Collections library or other form of repository. These sources can be materials such as manuscripts, objects, documents, and electronic records. To process any collection, it has its own methodology that abides by the guidelines of the Society of American Archivists.

The collection analyzed is a medical manuscript (Fig. 1.) of recipes presumably made by the guidelines of the Society of American Archivists. Hahnemann (1755-1843), Robert Koch who gave us vaccinations, were common in Kentucky. Since antibiotics weren't developed until the 1940s, compounds were given to simply treat symptoms of the patient. Antipyretics such as meadowsweet helped relieve aches, pains and fever, while pain relievers such as opium and aspirin lowered a fever, while pain relievers such as opium and aspirin lowered a fever, while pain relievers such as opium and aspirin lowered a fever, while pain relievers such as opium and aspirin lowered a fever, while pain relievers such as opium and aspirin lowered a fever, while pain relievers such as opium and aspirin lowered a fever, while pain relievers such as opium and aspirin lowered a fever, while pain relievers such as opium and aspirin lowered a fever, while pain relievers such as opium and aspirin lowered a fever, while pain relievers such as opium and aspirin lowered a fever, while pain relievers such as opium and aspirin lowered a fever.

Results

Figure 2. A frequency count of different mechanisms each ingredient displayed in correlation to the amount of times it appeared in the manuscript

Figure 3. A frequency count that displays each time an ingredient appeared in the manuscript

Discussion

The results indicated several commonly used ingredients such as blood root, Sanguinaria canadensis. The plants rhizome contains several forms of alkaloid shown in Fig. 4 that target multiple processes such as anti-inflammatory (AI), antimicrobial (AM), and anticancer (AC) at the molecular level. Bloodroot was once an ingredient in both mouth wash and toothpaste and did show reduction of plaque growth but has since been removed for medical use for further clinical testing due to its toxicity and possible synergistic effects.

Overall, the exploration and analysis of an archival source to show the relationship of the ingredients used in the 19th century for illness and medicine used now was somewhat successful.

Conclusion

The use of primary sources can help provide understanding, answers, and connections to those who explore archival collections in research. These collections expand our knowledge on the history of medicine from the 19th century and provides a list of commonly used ingredients to give insight on what was being prescribed as a remedy to ease symptoms given the epidemiology in Kentucky. It also aided to our understanding of our basic evolutionary biology. Homeopathic medicine is still practiced today. The American Institute of Homeopathy (AIH) promotes the growth and development of crude drugs. This study supports this practice of medicine by looking at drugs used now in modern medicines and analyzing the compound and its individual ingredients of natural sources that were administered years ago to ill patients. It helped stimulate the immune system and the body's natural ability to heal by diluting potency for maximum benefits.

Acknowledgments

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